

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR THE PREVENTION OF TRAILING EDGE DELETION IN IMAGE FORMING SYSTEMS

5 **Field of the Invention**

The present invention relates generally to the positioning of printing surfaces and printing devices and specifically to the capability of printing on a trailing edge of a piece of paper.

10 **Background of the Invention**

Image forming systems involve a variety of internal components configured to manipulate a piece of paper and produce an image on the paper. Conventional image forming systems are unable to produce an image along a trailing edge of the paper due to physical interference between internal components forming a paper path, e.g. manipulating the paper, and components capable of forming the image. Typically, the unprintable portion of the trailing edge may be up to approximately 3 cm, thereby reducing the utility of the image forming system to form an image on the paper.

Summary of the Invention

20 The present invention overcomes the limitations of conventional image forming systems as discussed above by the use of a trailing edge deletion prevention apparatus capable of manipulating the paper to allow components capable of forming the image to travel in proximity to the paper without obstruction.

According to a first embodiment of the invention, a trailing edge deletion prevention apparatus suitable for use with an image forming system is provided, having a paper guide mounted along a paper path and adapted to guide the paper along the paper path and a biasing member mounted to the image forming system and biased against the paper guide along the paper path and allowing a printing device to pass proximate to the biasing member while printing along a trailing edge of the paper.

30 According to a further embodiment of the invention, a trailing edge deletion prevention apparatus suitable for use with an image forming system is provided, having a paper guide mounted along a paper path and adapted to guide the paper along the paper path and a biasing member mounted to the image forming system and biased

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against the paper guide to cause the paper to be taut to a location further along the paper path and configured to accommodate a printing device to access a trailing edge of the paper.

According to a first embodiment of the invention, a trailing edge deletion
5 prevention apparatus suitable for use with an image forming system is provided, having
an interdigitated support element forming a plane and having a first portion
interdigitated with a second portion, wherein the first portion and the second portion are
movable relative to each other within the plane, an attachment device to secure a piece
of paper to at least one of the first portion and the second portion, wherein the
10 attachment device is adapted to selectively secure the paper to one of the first portion
and the second portion to allow the paper to be advanced along the plane by the relative
movement of the first portion and the second portion.

According to a first embodiment of the invention, a method for deleting a trailing
edge of a piece of paper processed by an image forming system is provided having the
15 steps of biasing a biasing member against a paper guide, passing a piece of paper
between the biasing member and the paper guide such that the piece of paper is taut to a
location further along a paper path and locating a printing device proximate to the
biasing member and the paper guide to allow an image to be formed along a trailing
edge of the paper.

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Brief Description of the Drawings

The foregoing and other objects, features and advantages of the
invention will be apparent from the following description and apparent from the
accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters refer to the same parts
25 throughout the different views. The drawings illustrate principles of the invention
and, although not to scale, show relative dimensions.

Figure 1 is a side view of an embodiment of the present invention having
a biasing member; and

Figure 2 is a side view of a further embodiment of the present invention
30 having an interdigitated support element.

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Detailed Description of the Invention

The present invention is directed toward trailing edge deletion prevention, minimizing a portion along the trailing edge of the paper which cannot be imprinted due to the structure of the image forming system.

5 The term "image forming system" includes a collection of different printing technologies, such as electrophotographic, electrostatic, electrostatographic, ionographic, acoustic, piezo, thermal, laser, ink jet, and other types of image forming or reproducing systems adapted to capture and/or store image data associated with a particular object, such as a document, and reproduce, form, or produce an image. An
10 example of an image forming system can be found in U.S. Pat. No. 5,583,629 to Brewington et al., the contents of which are herein incorporated by reference. As used herein, the term "paper" is intended to include a wide variety of imprintable media.

15 According to a first embodiment of the invention, Figure 1 provides an illustration of a biasing member 600 in communication with a paper guide 610 so as to provide the ability to hold a piece of paper 620 on a paper path firmly to the paper guide 610, allowing the head carriage 630 to come in communication with the paper 620 near a trailing edge of the paper 620. The biasing member 600 is biased against the paper guide 610, preferably asserting a force against the paper guide 610 so as to keep the paper taut to a location further along the paper path. By keeping the paper taut, an
20 image can be properly formed on the paper by a printing device. Examples of biasing members 600 include a pinch spring, leaf spring or other spring or elastic member. The biasing member 600 is preferably securely mounted to an image forming system frame at an end opposite the end of the biasing member 600 in communication with the paper guide 610. Alternatively, biasing member 600 may be mounted at any of one or more
25 locations along biasing member 600 such that a portion of biasing member 600 is biased against the paper guide 610. The paper guide 610 functions to guide the paper within the image forming system. Preferably, the paper guide 610 is a roller, but may also be a device formed to guide the paper, such as a metal or plastic component formed to allow the paper to slide along the device.

30 The present invention allows a printing device to be moved over a piece of paper 620 while allowing an edge 632 of the printing device 630 to extend beyond the paper guide 610. Therefore, a printing area 635 of printing device 630 can be located over the position where the biasing member 600 meets the paper guide 610. Because

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the biasing member 600 and paper guide 610 are able to hold a trailing edge of the paper 620, the printing device 630 can imprint the paper 620 very close to the trailing edge of the paper 620. The paper 620 travels in a direction indicated by the arrow 622.

According to a further embodiment of the invention directed toward
5 trailing edge deletion prevention, as shown in Figure 2, an interdigitated support element 700 is provided. The interdigitated support element 700 functions to provide two independently movable portions that each can selectively enhance its grip on a piece of paper to allow the independently movable portions to move the piece of paper. Examples of interdigitated support elements include an interdigitated table. The
10 interdigitated support element 700 may be operated by the use of electrostatic energy or a vacuum. As shown in Figure 2, the interdigitated support element 700 has a first portion 710 having a plurality of first digits 715. A second portion 720 is also provided having a plurality of second digits 725 located along and opposite to the first digits 715.

In order to advance a piece of paper, one portion of the interdigitated
15 support element, for example, a first portion 710 is activated so as to secure the paper. While the other portion, such as for example the second portion 720 is not activated, allowing the paper to remain free of the second portion 720. Then the first portion 710 is advanced away from the second portion 720. Next, the second portion 720 is activated to secure the paper, while the first portion 710 is deactivated, thereby releasing
20 the paper. Then the first portion 710 is able to return back to its original position proximate to the second portion 720. Therefore, the paper has been advanced in the direction of the first portion 710.

It is also within the scope of the invention to advance the paper in an opposite direction by reversing the order of activation and deactivation of the portions
25 described above. In another variation of the invention, the interdigitated support element 700 may be provided with a greater or lesser number of first digits 715 and/or second digits 725. The number of first digits 715 and the number of second digits 725 may be equal or unequal.

These examples are meant to be illustrative and not limiting. The present
30 invention has been described by way of example, and modifications and variations of the exemplary embodiments will suggest themselves to skilled artisans in this field without departing from the spirit of the invention. Features and characteristics of the above-described embodiments may be used in combination. The preferred embodiments

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are merely illustrative and should not be considered restrictive in any way. The scope of the invention is to be measured by the appended claims, rather than the preceding description, and all variations and equivalents that fall within the range of the claims are intended to be embraced therein.

- 5 Having described the invention, what is claimed as new and protected by Letters Patent is:

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